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EDITOR'S MISCELLANY

DEAR EDITOR:

I am moved to write you on a subject which has made a great impression upon me lately,—namely, the important need for nurses to begin early making provision for the time when they shall be worn out with the hard life of their profession, and want to rest in little homes of their own. I have just returned from an engagement where I was associated with a nurse who graduated nearly twenty years ago. She is a very superior woman; has been, and still is, a most successful nurse; I had often heard of her from doctors and patients. We fell to talking one day about the lack of business methods and business wisdom among nurses, and this led Miss S. to tell me of her own appalling condition regarding provision for her future and the terrible anxiety which is wearing upon her in consequence. Although she has been nursing almost steadily since her graduation, she has only two hundred dollars laid by, and what is to become of her when she can no longer work she does not know, for she is alone in the world. She longs for rest now and needs it, but there is no rest in sight for her. She has not been selfish in the use of her money. Loved ones in her own home needed her help, and she gave it until one by one she has seen them all laid to rest. But what is to become of her? Looking back over her life, she says she can see that if the seriousness of the present time had been impressed upon her, and she had had some knowledge of safe building and loan associations, or of endowment life insurance, or, above all, of some method of investing so as to secure an annuity after a term of years, she would have bound herself to paying an annual assessment. She would have found a way of doing it somehow, had she bound herself to it and not left it a voluntary matter. And then think what it would mean to her now to be able to lie back for a part of the year at least, and be assured of a certain annual income as long as she lives! But she did not do it. When she graduated the profession was young, nurses were in great demand, and the income seemed very, very big. But now the time is coming when the first graduates are beginning to experience what it really means to have made no provision for the inevitable time of inactivity. Until now the warning note has not been sounded very loudly. In the early years there seemed no great hurry about beginning to save; it was always, "Next year I will start a bank account."

Perhaps to give you a concrete instance of what may be done, and so help some other undecided nurse, I may be pardoned if I state what I have found practicable in my own experience. As the time drew near for me to receive my diploma, the question of earnings and savings occupied my thoughts to a considerable extent. I knew that I was not naturally of a thrifty disposition, my wants usually keeping close pace with the limits of my purse, but I also knew that in my declining days there would more than likely be no one to whom I could look to for support, and that therefore I must provide for myself while in the heyday of activity, and I set myself to study the best means of doing this.

My wardrobe needed replenishing for private duty, I had to rent a room for future head-quarters, and there was an invalid sister at home towards whose support I wished to contribute, so that saving for the first few months looked like an impossible feat; but I made up my mind to put five or ten dollars in the savings bank each month, no matter what might happen. For a year I succeeded at this very well, but during the next year my old love of spending got the upper hand of me many times and my bank deposits began to grow spasmodic, though my earnings were more than in the first year, and I began to see that the only safe road for me towards thrift lay in making some kind of an investment which would bind me to stipulated yearly payments. I studied advertisements and sent for literature on the subject. These, fortunately for me, I submitted to a friend, a business man whose judgment I knew to be sound. Several alluring "syndicate" advertisements, etc., he consigned to the waste-paper basket, and warned me emphatically against any investment which promised impossible returns. He strongly advised my taking out a life insurance endowment policy in some old, well-known company, pointing out to me that the older and more prosperous the company the larger the surplus of earnings must be, and therefore the more liberal the offer that could be made to its patrons. Under his guidance I looked up several companies, and found one which made a special offer to self-supporting women, and would secure to them a very generous cash sum at the expiration of the policy, or, if preferred, an annuity or regular yearly income to the end of life.

I have made several payments on this policy, and am surprised to find how easy it is to do this, now that I have committed myself. I am hoping to make double payments some years, and so shorten the time before which the policy expires. If, however, on the other hand, illness or misfortune should render it impossible for me to complete my payments, I can withdraw what I have put in, with interest (after the expense of the policy to the company has been deducted), just as I could from a bank, and not least of the comforts is that in the event of my death at any time my sister can draw the full amount for which the policy is made out—in my case, two thousand dollars.

GRADUATE.

WOULD IT BE AN UNMIXED GOOD?

MUCH is being said and written in these days regarding improvements in the care of patients in our hospitals.

This advice and counsel comes mostly from patients, and one of the latest suggestions is that hospitals increase their forces of nurses and attendants to such an extent that patients need never wait for any attention, whether necessary or imagined to be so.

For instance, the patient in question imagines that the window is open a little too much, the steam is not turned on quite enough, or she thinks she may want a drink in half an hour, and therefore will ask for it now.

These demands are all filled in time, but the patient would have them more promptly filled. Provided it were possible to so increase the number of nurses and attendants to meet all these wants with the desired promptness, and thus furnish employment for the minds of the patients, would the greatest good be to the patient? Is there not something required of nature in healing the sick?

Is there not time which must be spent in waiting for the natural processes? Does that garden flourish best that has the roots of its plants examined oftenest to note the progress thereof?

R.

BUFFALO NEWS.

THE initial meeting for the season of the Nurses' Association was held September 3 at the Guard of Honor rooms, the president, Miss Damer, in the chair.

Owing probably to the heavy rain, there was a small attendance.

Three applications for membership were presented, and two for the sick benefit. A notification of the appointment of the president as a member of the Woman's Board of Managers of the Pan-American Exposition was read.

The question box was opened and the question, "Is the instruction received in invalid cookery in the training-school of practical use to the nurse in private practice?" was followed by a lively discussion, the methods employed in the different schools being explained. A month or two in the diet-kitchen following a course of lessons was considered desirable.

It was decided to have a lecture given on foods and food values at an early date.

Another question, "Is the standard rate of twenty dollars per week for professional services strictly adhered to?" was answered with a decided negative. When from feelings of humanity, friendship, or necessity, a nurse agrees to accept a lower sum for the term of her engagement, it was considered best to give one or more weeks for nothing than to lower the price per week.

At the June meeting the subject of trained attendants was discussed and their competition after a few months' or a year's service as such with the regularly trained nurses. A committee was appointed to wait upon the directors of the Woman's Educational and Industrial Union, which has conducted such a class for years, and to point out to them the injustice to the patients as well as the nurses of this superficial and totally inadequate training.

We are glad to say that as the result of this committee's effort, the directors of the Union have decided to discontinue these classes, confine the lectures to young wives and mothers, hold no examinations, and grant no certificates. The graduates of the Buffalo General Hospital Training-School have formed an *alumnæ* association.

A LOCAL society of trained nurses has been formed in Cleveland, Ohio, with Miss McMillan, principal of Lakeside Hospital, as president.

THE trained nurses of Rochester, New York, were the first to form a county society, with State organization in view.

STATE ORGANIZATION IN NEW YORK.

A FEW nurses interested in the formation of a State Association met informally in New York City last spring to discuss the advisability of organizing. The multiplication of societies is undesirable unless it can be shown that this is necessary, and that the one proposed will do what can be done by no other. Our National Association is broad in its scope, and all embracing, as we hope it may become, in breaking down school prejudices, establishing an *esprit de corps* among nurses, and uniting them in common interests.

One thing for which it is striving is the elevation of the standard of nursing, —to have better schools, better trained women at the head of all schools, and

that the diploma which each nurse receives on being graduated will be what it professes to be, a certification of the fact that she is a *trained* nurse.

The diploma now held by a nurse from Smith's Corners or Split Rock Hospital, with four beds, seven nurses, and six-months' hospital training, has as much legal value as that of a graduate of Bellevue, Philadelphia, or Johns Hopkins, who has spent two or three years in hard work to obtain it. "Practical" nurses, trained attendants, trained nursery maids, discharged pupils, and probationers all don the "stripes," compete with, and claim the name and rank of those who justly are the only ones entitled to bear them. Is there any use in raising the wall, making it more difficult to obtain admittance by climbing, when it is so easy to crawl in underneath?

Is the nursing profession a meaningless term? Has it any rights, any privileges, secured to it by legislation? Can it say who shall enter its ranks or who shall be debarred from practising?

Do we desire to make it so that those who bear the name of nurse shall be so not in name only, but in deed and in truth?

If so, a State Association is necessary which can work for State registration and a uniform system of education.

The importance of this was impressed upon all those present at the New York meeting, and a committee was appointed consisting of Miss Meritt and Miss Dock, of New York; Miss Damer and Miss Nye, of Buffalo, and Miss Allerton, of Rochester, to make arrangements for a State meeting to be held at Albany during the fall to discuss organization and take action towards the formation of a State Association.

The committee was requested to notify all organized nursing societies in the State and ask them to send delegates to this meeting prepared to act. It is hoped that where there are no organized societies, these will be formed at once, either as *alumnæ*, city, town, or county associations, and that names of new organizations with address of secretary be sent to Miss Annie Damer, 55 West Mohawk Street, Buffalo, New York, who will be glad to furnish any information.

ORDER OF SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR NURSES.

MISS M. E. HIBBARD wishes to thank the members of the preliminary "order" of "The Spanish-American War Nurses" for their interested efforts, which have materially assisted in making this association a permanent one to-day.

As chairman of the proposed "order," it had always been Miss Hibbard's wish that the organization should be controlled by members of the nursing profession, and that consistency should be a virtue that would mark a state of progress.

In thanking the members who have from time to time expressed their appreciation of the work being done by the committee, Miss Hibbard would like to recommend the desirability of establishing and maintaining an *esprit de corps* among its permanent members. Miss Hibbard wishes to express her sincere regret at not being able to accept a nomination for office, as the uncertainty of location which is consequent upon the work of her profession would greatly interfere with the perfect performance of the duties incumbent upon the office.

As a member of the "Spanish-American War Nurses," Miss Hibbard will always be most interested and hopes to keep in touch with all the members.

MEETING OF SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR NURSES.*

THE meeting of the Order of Spanish-American War Nurses, held at the New York Hospital, September 4, 5, 6, was a most interesting and enjoyable affair. Dr. Anita Newcomb McGee and Miss Hibbard were the nominees for president, and as Miss Hibbard was unable to serve, Dr. McGee was elected by acclamation.

The subjects discussed were:

Shall we form ourselves into a working society?

Shall we have constitution, by-laws, and officers—president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer?

Shall we have yearly dues, and what amount?

Shall we have yearly meetings?

Where will the next one be?

At the luncheon at Sherry's the invited guests were Miss Mary Desha, D. A. R.; Mrs. Whitelaw Reid, III. Auxiliary of the Red Cross; Mrs. Douglass, Civil War nurse; Miss Mary Gladwin, Miss Dorsey.

First Toast.—To the Daughters of the American Revolution and their work during our late war. Response by Mrs. Whitelaw Reid.

Second Toast.—To the III. Auxiliary of the Red Cross and their work for the nurses. Response by Miss Mary Desha.

Third Toast.—To the United States Army Nurse. Response by Dr. Anita Newcomb McGee.

Fourth Toast.—To the Nurses of Montauk Point Hospital. Response by Dr. Laura Hughes.

Fifth Toast.—To the Nurses of the Civil War. Response by Mrs. Douglass.

Sixth Toast.—To the Nurses in Manila. Response by Miss Mary Gladwin.

Seventh Toast.—To the Sisters of Charity in the Late War and the Civil War. Response by Miss Dorsey.

Eighth Toast.—To the Nurses who went to South Africa. Response by Miss Hibbard.

Toast Mistress, Mrs. George Lounsbury.

WE call special attention to the advertisement of Meinecke & Co., who have put upon the market the most comfortable and sanitary bed-pan yet invented. For hospital use it is commended for the ease with which it can be perfectly cleansed and readily inspected.

* This report received too late to be given in full.—Ep.